

## Chapter III.

## Population.

## CARRIERS.

*Korcharus.*

**Korcharus**, numbering about 160, are found at Kundal in Siddápur. They are said to have come from Bellári in Madras in search of pasture.<sup>1</sup> They are cattle-breeders of Telugu extraction, who have exchanged their home tongue for Kánarese. They still eat and intermarry with their parent stock. Their family goddess is Mariamma, and their gods Gurappa and Venkatesh whose shrines are at Bellári and at Chandragutti in Maisur. They belong to four family stocks, Santipadia, Kavadia, Manpadia, and Menragutti. Persons belonging to the same stock do not intermarry. The names in common use among men are Venkta, Nága, Timma, and Ráma; and among women, Nági, Gangi, and Sanki. They are divided into Bid Korcharus, Dable Korcharus, Ur Korcharus, and Kunchi or Conjevaram Korcharus. Bid and Dable Korcharus dine together; and Bids give their girls to Dables though they do not marry Dable girls. The Urs and Kunchis neither eat together nor intermarry. They take food cooked by the first two subdivisions; but the first two do not eat or intermarry with them. They are dark, strongly made, and flat-featured with short broad noses. Their home tongue does not differ from the home speech of the Bellári Korcharus. During the rainy season they live in temporary tent-shaped huts with palm-leaf walls and roofs; and during the dry season, in blanket tents. Their only furniture is palm-leaf mats, earthen pots, and copper or brass pans and plates. Their staple food is millet and *rági*, but they eat rice, and, when they can afford it, eat flesh and drink liquor. They are moderate eaters. Most of the women wear a robe of white unbleached cloth, the skirt worn like a petticoat, the upper end drawn over the head. They wear no bodice. On holidays and grand occasions they deck their hair with flowers. Their ornaments are brass earrings, bell-metal bracelets, glass bangles, brass rings, and strings of small coloured glass beads round the neck. The men wear drawers of coarse strong cloth drawn in puckers round the waist and reaching the knee, a cloth band round the waist, a shoulder-cloth and blanket, and a headscarf. Their dress is untidy, and only the well-to-do have spare holiday clothes. They are thrifty, even-tempered, and hardworking, but untidy and fond of thieving. Most of them are pack-bullock drivers and carters, carrying up-country produce to the coast and taking back cocoanuts and salt, partly on their own account and partly on behalf of merchants. The poor among them work as servants, taking care of cattle and being paid £1 4s. to £1 10s. (Rs. 12-Rs. 15) a year besides food and clothing. A bullock costs about 3s. (Rs. 1½) a month to keep. The women travel with the men and help them in loading their carts and bullocks. Boys and girls of seven and upwards help their parents by herding cattle and cooking. They hire themselves to

<sup>1</sup> Korchars, also called Koramas and apparently connected with the Koravs, are 36,000 strong in Maisur. They come from the Northern Cirkárs, that is Bellári, are divided into Uppus and Kages, and speak mixed Telugu and Tamil. They carry salt and grain on cattle and asses, thieve and rob, and make bamboo mats and baskets. The men wind the hair in a large side-knot. The women have strings of red and white beads and shells falling over the bosom; in the forest they are said to wear nothing else. Rice's Mysor, I. 312 and 350, and III. 214.

merchants and rich people, but do nothing except their hereditary work. A man and woman together earn about 1s. (8 annas) a day, but their work is not steady. They earn enough for their maintenance, but are forced to borrow to buy cattle when they lose their stock by disease and also to meet marriage expenses. As they have to pay twenty-five per cent interest, most of them find it difficult to free themselves from debt. Of the four divisions Bids rank first, Dables second, Urs third, and Kunchis fourth. They hold themselves higher than barbers and washermen, and avoid touching shoemakers and other castes who are considered impure. When on the march they do nothing but drive and look after their animals; when they halt they mend their pack-saddles and bags and go about looking for lading. A family of five spends about 12s. (Rs. 6) a month; their hut costs about £1 (Rs. 10) to build; their furniture, including small copper or brass pots called *tambiges*, five earthen pots, two water pots, two bell-metal plates, one wooden pestle, a grind-stone, a cane basket, a billhook, and an axe, is worth £1 4s. to £2 (Rs. 12-Rs. 20). They are a religious people, having no family priests, but consulting Bráhmans and paying them great respect. Their chief objects of worship are Mariamma, Tirmal, and Máruṭi. They keep *Sankraman* in January, *Yugádi* in April, *Dasra* in October, and *Diváli* in November. They never go on pilgrimage and have no religious Teacher except their headman. They offer fruit, fowls, sheep and goats to Mariamma, and eat the victims especially during the *Dasra* holidays in October. They are firm believers in witchcraft, sorcery, and the spirits of the dead, employing sorcerers who are generally the priests of the village temples to lay troublesome ghosts. They consider themselves impure for three days after a birth. Children are named on the twelfth day. The name is fixed by the father or in the father's absence by the eldest person in the house after consulting a Bráhmaṇ who is paid 6d. (4 as.). They fix the lucky moment for marriage with the help of a Bráhmaṇ, who also tells them whether the marriage will prove lucky or not. On the evening before the wedding day the bride is brought to the bridegroom's house. On the morning of the wedding day the bridegroom falls at the feet of his parents and he and the bride sit on a blanket in two circles within which figures of the sun and moon have been marked in quartz powder and a heap of rice with five annas in copper piled. Five married women come and rub the bride and bridegroom with turmeric paste, lead them outside of the marriage booth, and bathe them thrice in water. Then a branch of the *khair* or catechu tree is felled and dropped into the nearest well. At midnight the five married women singing songs go to the well and after each has drawn a pottle of water take the branch out of the well. The branch is then planted opposite the front door. Close to it are piled two heaps of millet, two small water-pots, a large pot full of oil, and fourteen pounds of cotton seed. All are set on fire and when the flame is at its fiercest, they take rice in their hands, rub some grains on the bride's and bridegroom's foreheads and sprinkle the rest on their heads. Early next morning the men take 8s. (Rs. 4) from the bridegroom and spend it on liquor. The *khair* branch

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is plucked up and thrown into running water. This ends the ceremony. The whole company are fed on mutton, curry, liquor, vegetables, and sweetmeats. Polygamy is allowed and practised; polyandry is unknown. Widows may marry but not more than seven times. They mourn the dead three days, during which they are impure. They have an elective headman called *budvant*, who is held in high respect, and settles social disputes and strictly controls the conduct of the caste people. His decisions are final, and those who demur are put out of caste. Ordinary breaches of caste rules are punished by fine, and eating with impure castes by expulsion. If a man who has been put out of caste makes atonement, the headman or *budvant* may receive him back. They do not send their children to school or take to new callings.

**Kormarus.**

**Kormarus**, also called **MARIYAVARUS**, a class of cattle-breeders and carriers, number about twenty. They are found in Sirsi and Siddápur and are said to have come from the Telugu country. The men are stout, dark, stalwart, and regular featured. Out of doors they talk Kánarese, but their home speech is Telugu. They live in small houses with mud walls and front yards. Their every-day food is rice and dried fish, and, when they offer sacrifices, they eat flesh and drink liquor. They are great eaters and good cooks, but are excessively fond of chillies and tamarind. The men wear a narrow waistcloth in Marátha fashion, throw a black blanket round their shoulders, wind a black scarf round their heads, and sling a wallet on their backs. The women dress like Hálepáik women. They are clean, hardworking, honest, sober, and thrifty. They are carriers and have large numbers of pack-bullocks. Like the Lambánis the men spend the fair season in carrying betelnuts, molasses, and rice to the coast, and taking cocoanuts and salt inland. They are well-to-do and rank next to Gollars. Their daily life does not differ from that of the Lambánis. A family of five spends about 14s. (Rs. 7) a month. Their chief deity is Mariamma whose temple is at Chitaldurg in Maisur. They also worship evil spirits and believe in soothsaying, witchcraft, and in the power of spirits. There is no rule that a girl should be married before she comes of age. But they generally marry their girls between ten and thirteen and their boys between sixteen and eighteen. They bury their dead. Their caste affairs are managed by their own community. The making of roads has broken their monopoly as carriers. They are not well-to-do, and show no signs of improving as they neither send their boys to school nor take to new pursuits.

**Lambánis.**

**Lambánis**, numbering about 640, are found during the fair season in bands of ten to fifty moving with pack-bullocks to and from the coast. They generally spend the rainy season above the Sahyádris, but they have no regular settlements. They are said to have come from Gujarát to the Karnátak, and as their women and children came with them they keep clear traces of their northern origin in appearance, speech, manners, and customs.<sup>1</sup> They have

<sup>1</sup> In Maisur the Lambánis or Brinjáris have an estimated strength of 33,000. The women keep their peculiar Rájputána petticoat and shawl, and wear their hair in

no subdivisions. Both men and women are fair-skinned, tall, and strong. Their home speech is a mixture of Gujaráti and Hindi, but they can talk Hindustáni and Kánarese. They have no fixed homes. During the fair weather they live in tents about twelve feet by seven, worth about 6s. (Rs. 3), made of large bamboo mats on rattan or bamboo skeletons. They can be taken down or set up in a few seconds and carried on their bullocks wherever they go. During the rains they live in small sheds with wattled reed walls and thatched roofs either near villages or near pasture-grounds. Their ordinary food is millet, rice, and dry or fresh fish, but they also eat flesh except pork and beef and drink liquor. They are great eaters and are very fond of sweets. The men shave the head and face except the top-knot and moustache. They wear a waistcloth or loose drawers, a shouldercloth, and a headscarf, and sling on their shoulders a large wallet in which they carry their money, tobacco, betel leaves, betelnuts, and lime. They wear silver girdles. The women have a short petticoat of coarse dark and red striped cloth tied with a string in puckers round the waist and falling almost to the ground, a rudely embroidered short-sleeved bodice open at the back, and a scarf drawn over the head like a veil. Their dishonest thieving ways keep them under the special charge of the police. From the interior to the coast they bring dry betelnuts, molasses, chillies, rice, *rági*, pepper, and cardamoms, and take salt and cocoanuts inland. Their trade as carriers has greatly suffered by the opening of roads and the increased use of carts. Some of them are petty dealers and almost all own pack-bullocks, and as carriers earn enough for their maintenance. They suffered terribly during the 1876 and 1877 famine. They rank next to Gaulis. Men, women, and children attend to the driving of cattle when they travel from place to place. When they halt the children herd the cattle, the women cook, and the men load and unload the bullocks. A family of five spends about 14s. (Rs. 7) a month. Their chief deity is Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, and they worship all ordinary Hindu gods, but have no faith in soothsaying, witchcraft, or sorcery, and neither reverence nor employ Bráhmans. Their spiritual Teacher is the headman of their own caste who is called *budvant*. There are no rules restricting the marriable age of boys or of girls; and their birth, marriage, and death ceremonies are performed by their headman. Boys as well as girls are married at any time. The bridegroom has to give the father of the girl about £10. (Rs. 100) and four bullocks as the price of the girl. In widow marriages this sum is not paid. If a woman wishes to divorce her husband and marry another, she is allowed to do so provided the new husband pays the old one £6 8s. (Rs. 64) to make good what he spent on the first wedding. They burn their dead and mourn ten days. On the third day after a death a feast is given to the caste people and food is offered to the crows in the name of the dead. On the

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ringlets decorated with plants and shells. (Rice, f. 349). Great numbers were attracted to the English army during the third Mair war (1789-1793) (Wilks' South of India, III. 209) and again during the fourth Mair war in 1799 when they did much harm by pillaging the country (Buchanan, I. 180, 182).